Letter. No 3. Tuesday. March 17.

Major. J. H. Massey.
6. Palestinian Coy. The Buffs.
M. E. F.

My sweet darling.

I have been fiddling & doodling & o-ing & ah-ing for half an hour, wondering what to write to you about. I have replied to your letters as best I can - I have sent you an Aerogram this morning. And so I have more or less sent you all the news. And so I am reminding myself now that I am writing mainly for your pleasure & comfort & I hope, entertainment, that I must pull myself together, instead of to pieces.

Thursday. March 19. Perhaps you can understand, because I find it difficult to explain - the waves of depression & hopelessness which come over me & make it quite impossible for me to write to you. So it was on Tuesday, & you see what I achieved. Would it be better, if I were to tear up that sheet beginning 'Dearest' again & pretend that I am feeling fine & dandy. I can't see it really - because the whole basis of my feelings for you & our relationship & its effect on my life out here is bound up with the most complete misery because I am separated from you; & when that separation has been going on for 18 months & shows no sign of coming to an end, I just cannot pretend that I ever feel happy for a moment. & I don't really want you to think that I do. I want you to know darling, that life for me is hell without you, & it will always be the same. And when I am having a worse attack than usual, I just cannot write. But I never allow this to

continue for too long. This is my fourth letter this month & it will be posted tomorrow. It is midday - I intend to go on writing for you until bedtime, with various breaks to attend to necessary work etc. When I work hard all day, I am a bit tired by the end of it & then the evening comes I am in an ideal & receptive frame of mind for an attack of misery & melancholy. I have been trying recently to work a little less hard, & to socialise more with other people. But new things are always popping up & bits of extra work adding themselves; & I have not been too successful yet.

I told you I had written a pretty rude letter to a R.A.F. squadron leader & also reported him to the Area Commander. Well - the result was salutary & immediate; very satisfactory for me (I cannot tell you what it was all about) - but this has meant much extra work.

You were saying in a letter that I am doing an awful amount of changing officers - I am still at it. That Canadian person who came to me on special report had to be reported on by me this week. I sent an adverse report, said he was ignorant, lazy, & very unreliable: this is all endorsed by Col. L. - so the bloody man is practically certain to lose his commission & be flung out of the army. As an officer he has the right of appeal under a section of the Army Act - & he is taking advantage of this. The basis of his appeal is firstly that he was wronged by a misunderstanding in his other Coy - that when he came to me, I took a prejudiced view of him. And secondly, that in this Coy there is a very much higher standard of discipline & training - & so he was always being checked in this Coy for

doing things which were normal & everyday in the other one. He is right up to point because the other Coy is criminally slack & slipshod. But Carsenby was not spoiled there - he's been a liar & a bluffer for years & is quite incurably lazy. He will be a good riddance.

And now I am telling about this chap Dikman. It's dreadful isn't it? But they should not make the mistake of commissioning these people. Any one of my Sgts would make a better officer than either of these two people.

I told you before that Dikman is mad - I'm sure of it now - I'll give you some good laughs about him when I come home. This is bad enough - but he has an overwhelming desire to be popular with the men & so shuts his eye when they do things wrong. & generally allows them to do whatever they want. I have warned him in extremely plain language about this. Twice & explained at length the importance of discipline & order. The observations which showed this between officer & man. The final straw came yesterday when my C.S.M. visited the detachment of which Dikman is in charge. One of my corporals reported to the C.S.M. that Dikman had had him up to his room & explained how it hurt him to have to punish men. & that he had wanted to go on well with the men & make life easy & pleasant for them. But that he was forced to do this by the C.O. & he wanted the men to understand this. He then told the corporal never to tell any thing to the C.S.M. because the C.S.M. passed every thing on to the C.O. with the result that he got sacked

- it all came back on the men.
What do you think of that? The more I think of it the more furious I feel. The bloody little twits - I'll give him a blasted rocket. I have put in 12 months slogging with this Corps to make it into quite a good one - & that half baked lunatic apparently thinks he can come along & undo all that in a few weeks. Bloody impudence!
Anyway, I have put it all out col. h. now, with a strong recommendation that I be advised to Court Martial the man.
And I have a Court Martial coming up on three of my soldiers - they were on duty guarding a crashed Wellington bomber, instead of guarding it, they pinched some valuable part of it & tried to get them out of camp for a sale. It was lucky we caught them.
The case is complicated because each one of them is evidence against the other two, a man cannot be forced to give evidence about another man if it tends to incriminate himself. But I had to take down about 25 pages of written summary of evidence, & now it has all gone up to the H.Q. legal dept for sorting out.
So you see, my dearie, there are always extra things coming along to complicate life & make it more difficult & tedious.
I had quite a pleasant evening last Monday. On Sunday there had been a tea party given by the Jewish Welfare Committee, the first of the series, for the Jewish

officers & their British officers too. Ben & Levantine went, I stayed behind. Mrs Samuel was there & was talking to Ben about me - & apparently told him that she likes me by far the best of the majors - this is not so much of a compliment really, if you were to know the other majors. Anyway she told Ben to ask me to phone her in the morning, which I did - when she said she was staying in Tel Aviv for a few days & asked me to come in. I found another man there, a Russian Jew called Shapira, who is head of the Palestine Electric Corporation. We then went along to have dinner with a man - his wife - called Kirchner, a South African Jew & a solicitor. We had an excellent dinner & a most interesting evening. There is really no doubt, you know, that Jews of this class & education & intelligence are very much more intelligent than and interesting to talk to than their English counterparts - on the average. Mrs. S. told a most amusing & pretty aggravating story about the A.T.S., which has just started in Palestine. The idea was mooted about a year ago, & a woman called Commander Chitty came out from England, specially to go into the matter. She spent a few weeks here, then went home & reported that there were no suitable or available people in the country! Apparently all she had done was to talk to Lady Maxwell the High Commissioner's wife, who had told her that there were no suitable "girls" at all, all of which were working for her in

the Red Cross. Mrs. S. was furious about this & promptly wrote a memorandum which went up to the War Council. And so, last month, twelve months later than need have been, they started the first course for 60 selected women to be trained as officers & eight another 500 started in camps this week, there will be another 1000 next month, & so it will go on. And the Chitty woman has been sent out again in command of the unmitigated woman carries on. It's amazing, when you consider the implications of that blunder. Probably, by now, they could have had 10,000 A.T.S. - that number would have been doing men's jobs - which would mean that, either 10,000 men would have been released for service & / or fighting here or in the F.E. - or else that 10,000 men need not have been sent & arms & equipment could have come instead. Either of which / as Jews might have just made the difference in Libya or elsewhere. It's hellish, you know. Don't you agree?

The Chitty woman had only to walk in the streets of Jerusalem - Haifa - Tel Aviv to see with her own eyes. As for that Miss High Commissioner - & her bleak looking husband - they cannot see beyond the Arabs - & seem to go out of their way to ignore & insult the Jews. For the officers N.C.O.s course, after an almighty struggle, it seems that they managed to rake up one Arab girl, who finished the course as a N.C.O. The other day, they had a kind of recruiting affair on the wireless - the only

A.T.S. girl to be asked to speak was this solitary Arab girl. The only thing that surprises me is that they don't actually take their trousers down & kiss their bottoms. It's about all that's missing.

I think such people are just as bad as 5th columnists or traitors. Though we should not liquidate them as they do in Russia, it is a much preferable system to making them cabinet ministers & the like, as they did in France. And the results prove it.

I think I forgot to tell you that a week last Sunday, I went to a Palestine Orchestra Concert with Ben. I did not enjoy it as much as usual. I have lost my programme & cannot just remember all about it. There was something of Mozart's which was rather jerky & tuneless. And the ugly Debussy by Ravel, which I did not like at all - he was the first of the modernists was he? - I'm afraid I cannot understand the music. I feel so much more at home with the real classical music. And there was a Beethoven symphony, which was lovely. Ben & I are going to have dinner with Bernstein - his wife on Sunday - I believe we are going to another concert.

I seem to have been doing more going out lately.

Last night there was a R.A.F. Concert Party - & really it was very good. They were all R.A.F. men, who are doing a U.S.O. tour. The leading light & backbone was a man called Eddie Malin, who had been working with Vic Oliver, Bebe Daniels etc - he was very funny indeed & was on & off the stage all the time

for the 2½ hours which the show lasted. I was particularly pleased that it was good, because I had invited Bernstein for dinner & then to see the concert. The reason being that the Jewish Welfare Concerts are always rather highbrow & generally rather miserable - they always say "oh, the Jews are different." And I have always maintained that the Jews are not different at all & enjoy a bloody good laugh as much as anybody else. Well - my men loved it last night - & when Bernstein left he thanked me very much & said he had learned a lesson, which he rather thought was what I had intended. I just gave him a rather fat & smug smile: but I think it has made him think; & I hope the men will now get more cheerful concerts.

By the way, I have just remembered the enclosed cutting. It will show you - roughly - what Mrs Samuel looks like; & what a typical old Jewish mother is. I imagine her to be rather like Amy's mother.

Tomorrow, Ben & I are invited to a R.A.F. dance. I had to accept the invitation, but have been thinking ever since about how to evade it - but I'm afraid I shall have to go, with the two main objects of leaving early, & not dancing.

You know, better than anyone, my darling, that I am no dancing man. But I am looking forward to going to a dance, dancing with you again. It will be so lovely to change, go out together, hold you in my arms & pop round the floor, have some drinks & talk. And get home beautifully sleepy & tired -

but perhaps not too sleepy. Tired.

I was thinking the other day of our lovely short week end in Paris on our way to St Maxima. I can remember it so clearly. We had lunch at P.R.S. with your ma & pa, & Lisa, who was of course sweet, very boisterous on the floor. And that funny saloon on the cross channel boat, where we had a drink. And the hotel, where they remembered Paul & Eileen on their honeymoon. And then we wandered round the streets, & eventually found a place, where we had some gorgeous onion soup - which you must learn to make, darling. And then we did make love in Paris! In the morning, we went to the Louvre - & wandered there through their lovely gardens on a perfect June morning. Lunch, we had on a boulevard place near Notre Dame - where we went in afterwards, & saw a wedding going on. Then we went along the champs Elysées, to the Arc de Triomphe (that sounds rather a mockery now) & we walked back, bought some things in a chemists, & had some tea. And then we had a marvellous dinner at a place in a square, on the left hand side on the way from the Arc - including champagne cocktails. And then we went along to the P.L.M. station & got our seats on the train & hired pillows & bought apples & peaches & soda & beer. Just take your mind back, my darling one. Was it not lovely & perfect? And we will have these perfectly lovely times again. Highlights along the

course of a happy, contented, interesting & exciting life.
Oh darling - how I love you & how I long to be
with you. Every day that passes I love you more & long for
you more. And every time I think of you, which is very
often every day - I realise what a sweet lovely wife I
have, & thrill when I think that she loves me. And
that Maxie is waiting to see me too. I am very
fortunate, my darling. We, neither of us, look upon
ourselves as being lucky people, when we think of the
blows we have had to stand. But notwithstanding
our darling Lisa & our first Maxie - I am still a
very fortunate person. Never, for one split second
have I doubted my everlasting & complete & constant
love for you, my darling Barbara. And I have
set the same about your love for me. Please always
feel the same about me. I promise you, from
the depths of my heart, that I will always be
worth it. And I will try very hard to be more
worth it. If only they would let me come
home. I want to come so much & feel sure
my reasons are better than anyone else's. But I am
so afraid that I have failed again. We have very
much to stand, haven't we darling? Our reward will
always be when we meet again, whenever it is.
But the waiting is so hard & painful.
Much love & a big kiss to Maxie - & all my love
& many big kisses to you my own darling
beautiful Barbara. Harry. x x x x x x x x x.

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